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NO. 1.

ADDRESS OF GOV. YANCE,

ON THE

CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY,

DELIVERED AT WILMINGTON, N. C., FEB. 22, 1864.

(A SHORT HAND REPORT, BY G. CLINTON STEDMAN.)

FELLOW-CITIZENS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—I do not know how it is possible for me to make myself heard by this large audience, unless I adopt the plan of the one armed soldier who could not hug his sweetheart all the way around, and so was forced to chalk the distance he could reach on one side, and then turn and hug as far on the other. (Laughter.) It is scarcely possible for me to tell you, fellow citizens, what my feelings are on once more visiting the people of Wilkes county. I well remember, and perhaps some of you do likewise, the first time I ever made my appearance before you. In the summer of '58, a stranger, a boy in years and experience came among you seeking one of the highest offices within your gift; having nothing in the world to recommend him—you having never even heard of his name before. Yet I was so fortunate in making a favorable impression upon you, that you took me up, and from that day to this have never failed to heap honors upon my head. I would be worse than ungrateful, especially when I have this vast assembly to-day a witness to the fact that I am still remembered by the people of Wilkes county, if I were not favorable to your interest—may, if I were not willing to lay down my life for you. May God bless you, fellow citizens, for your kindness to me. It affords me great pleasure indeed to meet so large an assembly from this and adjoining counties. I rejoice to know that even in the midst of a great and desolating war, the people, in such large numbers can yet leave their homes and business to listen to one speak upon the condition of their public affairs, aside from the gratification which proceeds from a recognition of the personal compliment you pay me, as expressed by the large audience that honors me with its presence and attention. I shall endeavor to justify both the public interest you display and the compliment you bestow, by to day doing something which is very rare in a politician—by telling the truth.

Why have you, my fellow-citizens, invited me to speak to you on this nat'l day of the great Washington? What is it you want? Of course you desire to hear about the condition of the country. Of course you want the plain, unadulterated, undisguised facts; not that which would be most pleasing to you, but that which is true. You would be unable to find a demagogue who could comply with this requirement, because with him the habit of telling the people that which flatters their vanity, and carefully avoiding any painful truth which might shock their tender sensibilities, has grown into a second nature, from which we may anticipate no substantial food for the body politic, such as these trying times imperatively demand. In an hour like this, and on such an occasion as the present, especially is it of the most profound importance that no considerations should influence, save those affecting your deepest and most lasting interests. I am not so hypocritical as to boast that in all my past career I have never once talked "soft nonsense" to the "dear people." On the contrary, I am free to confess that otherwise I would not have been such a successful suitor for political favors. (Laughter.) But I flatter myself, I have preserved enough honor and candor to prevent me, when so urgent a necessity requires it, from telling that which is most pleasant in preference to that which is most true, and from trifling with the destinies of my country. I esteem myself very fortunate in having saved so much as this from the breakers wherein so many craft go to pieces in the tempestuous waves of political life. Indeed I may say I am as lucky as Paddy Maguire, an old acquaintance of my friend, Judge H. —, who, in reply to the friendly inquiry of the latter, how he got on, exclaimed, "Well may it please you, hon, I've bin upon yer state dockit, an' bin durant, an' got a floggin' at the whipping post, since ye was here; but thanks be to the Virgin, amid all me wickedness and raskhality I've preserved my religi'ous int're." (Laughter.) And so rmid all my political short comings I have preserved honesty enough, I hope, to tell you what I conceive to be true about the condition of the country, the aspect of its civil and military affairs, the prospects of the future, and the duties that devolve upon us in the accomplishment of the work before us.

A people who have been afflicted as you have been afflicted; a people who suffer as you suffer; a people whose gallant boys have been slaughtered as your sons have fallen on the battle field; whose darlings now lang lish in Northern prisons; wives whose husbands are wasting in far distant camps weary months of listless inactivity, while the weeds choke the scanty harvest, and the children pine for the presence and support of their natural protector; old men, who, in feverish anxiety await intelligence which each succeeding morn may bring of the slaying of their pride, and support of their declining years—all are liable to reach out, with the spirit of a drowning man, to grasp any passing straw, which, for the moment, may keep their heads above the rising flood, loosing sight meanwhile of the firm, though perhaps distant shore which, with calm, determined and persistent effort, they will assuredly enabled to attain.

In consequence of this continued suffering which experience had not prepared the people to endure with the fortitude possessed by some nations who have been nurtured to the shock of arms, a certain discontent has pervaded a and a funeral gloom hung over the community, engendering, if we credit a wide rumor, throughout the State, a notion that we must have a Convention—that we must secede from the Southern Confederacy; that we must repudiate the whole thing and go back and do our first work over again.

Now permit me to ask you what it was that got you into this scrape? Why, you all know it was the fact of your secession in the first instance. (Applause.)

Suppose you were sick of typhoid fever and had been close to death's door; and becoming convalescent, the physician should gravely inform you that the only plan to effect your entire recovery would be to take another spell of the infernal fever? Would you not think him a fool? (Laughter.) Or suppose a surgeon should say to a soldier with a ball in his leg: "My dear fellow, I don't see how it is possible for you to obtain relief unless I call for a musket and put another one in the other leg." That would be curious surgery, would it not? Would a system based on the same principle be less absurd when applied to the healing of the body politic?

Secession was tried after it had been considered for a period of forty years, and the whole country understood it as completely as an abstraction could be understood. We were promised it should be peaceful. What is the result? Why, it has been anything else. It has involved us in a war that has no parallel upon the pages of history. Do you expect to find a remedy by a repetition of the dose that brought you to bed? You will pardon me for a funny illustration of so serious a subject, but I am somewhat like the old lady, who, in company with her "old man" used to visit a country store kept by one Major Smith, (as there are no Majors and no Smiths in this section, there is no danger of identifying him.) The Major kept some fine samples of 47 goods in the cellar, to which he treated his customers before displaying his dry goods up stairs; for he knew, as you do, that a man in a certain state of exhilaration imagines he can buy two or three counties, to say nothing of goods and groceries. (Laughter.) And the aforesaid old couple were about the best customers he had. On one occasion, after repeatedly going up and down stairs, they got in such a good humor, that when they started home the Major could barely lift them on the saddle—the old lady behind in good old-fashioned style. She was in ecstasies with the Major. He was "the finest storekeeper she ever see in all her born days. Bless that Major, what nice samples he does put up to be sure, and how sweetes!" Grapping the old man with one hand and jesticulating with the other, she proceeded to expatiate on the Major's charming qualities, until they came to a branch, up the opposite bank of which the old man managed to ride,

while the old lady unconsciously slipped off quietly into the stream. The old fellow rode some distance before he discovered he had lost something, and rode back to the stream when he ascertained what it was. There she lay in the branch, flat on her back, and had dammed up the water until it had just begun to run into the corners of her mouth. She imagined she was in the cellar, talking to the Major, and "sampling." Rolling her eyes, pursing up her mouth, she would say every now and then, "not any more it is sweetened." (Continued laughter.) Just so with your humble servant in regard to secession:—Not another drop Major, if you please, sweetened or not. (Laughter and applause.)

Our destinies, my fellow-citizens, have now come in another government; and although, as you all know, I regretted to go out of the former government, and was one of the last to lay it down, and did so with the same mournful feelings with which I followed my dear father to the grave, I never expected, and do not now expect to see it resurrected. Our Convention, composed of delegates fresh from the people, by the most solemn oath that can bind an honorable people to a cause, have pledged their all to its support. May God aid us in the fulfillment of this obligation in the future as in the past, to the letter. The act was a deliberate expression of public sentiment, though it may have been wrong. The government we selected is ours, as much as are our own children. The spirit of patriotism is akin to the love of our spring which God has implanted in us—the highest, holiest sentiment of humanity. A man should love his home if nothing else but because it is his, and shun him; he should love his wife if he for no other reason than because she is his wife; he should love his State because it is his, a part as it were, of his being; he should love his country, right or wrong, (when in the midst of clashing events he cannot take time to examine all aspects of the question,) because in its destiny are involved the welfare of State, community, home, wife, children, self. But if you have no other reason to give for defending it, say you do so because it is your country.

Now, gentlemen, I desire to present to you all the various aspects of this question. You have placed me in a position that enables me to gather from sources of information beyond the reach of the public generally, facts which are necessary to a solution of the difficulties and problems which agitate your minds; and if you will only have charity enough to believe that I am honest in what I say, possibly you on, retiring, be able to quote the passage of scripture: "It was good for me to be here."

Now what is it you desire above all other present earthly good? (Voices—"peace," "peace," "we all want peace.") I know you do. Everybody wants peace. Peace, blessed peace! Why, the man who does not desire peace is unworthy existence—Peace. It is one of the highest and holiest attributes of Deity, so much so, that our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, was called the Prince of Peace. The great Apostle Paul said of the highest character of peace, "Peace good to all." (Great applause.) Who then would you have to defend North Carolina? A few old men and some militia officers.

Suppose, as the last alternative for obtaining peace, your Convention should take the State out of the Confederacy and put it into the arms of Lincoln. Just so soon as you entered into the old Union and swore to support that government, just so soon would you have imposed your share of the debt, taxes, burthens of the United States—Instead of the Confederate tax collector coming around to gather up Confederate currency, (when it must be confessed there is no great lack in the land) the Federal agent comes to you demanding "green backs" and gold to assist in carrying on the war. Instead of getting your sons back to the plow and fireside, they would be drafted and sent into the service of Uncle Sam, to fight alongside of his negro troops in exterminating the white men, women and children of the South. Is there anything very desirable about such a peace as that? Extend your suppositions into the domains of absurdity, and conceive of the North Carolina soldiers basely deserting their comrades in arms, in obedience to the proclamation of your Governor. Why gentlemen, they would not come home in peace to tell you. They would have to fight with their new friends, and would just cross from the Southern to the Northern side of the Rappahannock, and their rifles would be pointed at the bosoms of the brave men who have fought by their sides through the fierce fire of a three years war. Would that give you peace?

To think of these glorious North Carolina Regiments—you have seen them in the first flush of martial enthusiasm—you know them now unfeeling, though still but by honor and duty; many of them fill up the Southern Cross over so many fields already made crimson by their prowess, a astonishing the world, and raising the nations on, up to admiration of their heroic achievements; shall they be asked to intermingle with the miserableness who have slaughtered our people, desolated our homes, and even inflicted the crowning outrage which demons from hell pale at, on our mothers and sisters; shall they be asked to join these wretches in desolating the homes of the very men by whose sides they have so long fought and suffered? I know you would not think of this proposition. I think I can assure you to day with all candor and all honesty—as a dying man to dying men—in the presence of God—that any step of this kind will only involve you to a deeper and bloodier war. The calamities of war affect our people to a terrible degree, streams of tears are running down the cheeks of many a poor woman; cries for bread come from many a suffering child. But let us trust that the God of battles who gave to our ancestors through seven long years, a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, will yet lead us into the land where grows the fruitage of liberty, richer than the clusters of *Euclid*, and through which now the milk and honey of independence and nationality. (Applause.)

I have not, fellow-citizens, enumerated all the consequences which would follow inconsiderate action on your part. What would become of the currency should you abandon the cause of the Southern Confederacy. It is bad enough already, but every bank in the State is filled with it, and would be broken and worthless to-morrow, in such an event. Weows, soldiers, families and orphan children have no other kind. Consider the present suffering on account of the depreciation of the currency, would be insupportable if world-wide; what would become of the gallant soldiers who have been maimed and mutilated in the service—these one-legged, one-armed boys, incapacitated for labor? Having thus submitted ourselves to the enemy, you might see one of them come up, his cheeks wan with suffering, his rage flattening in the breast, his wasted form supported on crutches, and ask the government for support. The reply would be, "You infamous rebel, have you the impudence to ask support from a government you have been fighting to destroy?"

You will get no pension; but you will tax as heavily as we can your little potato patch to pay on the man who maimed you for life, desolated your home, burned your house, left your mother. "How could you endure such a spectacle?" Let us not cease to remember that we all consented to this war, Old Line Whigs as well as Secessionists. We consented, after it appeared inevitable, and we must all stand up to it—every man, woman and child throughout the length and breadth of the Southern Confederacy. We must forget, if possible for a while, that causes which led originally to this rupture, and each man take upon his shoulder the full measure of burden and responsibility, regardless of consequence. (Applause.)

But suppose, fellow-citizens, we could forget all these considerations of honor, glory, and decency, and resolve that we would see what term we could get from the United States. What does the enemy seek? You are well aware what the when man sets out to make a bargain he makes it as illuring as possible to him; he presents his goods in the best possible light, and says the most flattering things to induce you to accept his offer. Well, the same policy pertains to diplomacy. When an ambassador or diplomatist is trying to get a position in the most plausible language he can, and presents the most advantageous terms he can possibly offer as to induce negotiations. Possibly some of you know men who would do better by a friend than they promised to do, but I do not think the majority of you ever heard of them. Can any of you put your finger on a man who has done more for you than he bargained for? It is so hard to find one in the circle of your acquaintance, who in the name of Heaven, can tell me of a Yankee who ever gave you more than he agreed to? (Applause.) The difficulty is to make him stand up to his bargain. (Voices—"that's so.")

Why of course if such a proceeding on the part of North Carolina would secure her independence, it would only be necessary for one State to secede at a time, get herself acknowledged, and after all were out, turn round and form such a Confederacy as best pleased them. Old Abraham is fighting us with one hand and jesticulating with the other, she proceeded to expatiate on the Major's charming qualities, until they came to a branch, up the opposite bank of which the old man managed to ride,

while he would continue to fight us. The idea that Lincoln would recognize us or aste his claim to allegiance and obedience, is preposterous. Well, would the Southern Confederacy recognize your independence and make a treaty of peace with you? This is entirely owing to contingencies. If you went out of the Confederacy and declared yourself independent, you would have to announce and enforce your position of neutrality to the other belligerents, or there would be no war. How could you present when once announced? The

union between the armies of the Confederacy is the

of Gen. Johnston, between Virginia and

the remainder of the Confederacy, is the

of Gen. Lee, between Virginia and the

the South. You do not suppose we could

the government of the United States to

the South. (Applause.)

Now what does Mr. Lincoln promise the State of

North Carolina? In what language does he clothe

his gracious terms of pardon and amnesty? He

says, if one-tenth of the people of any State will

take an oath to support what? The Constitution?

Nay, take an oath to support his proclamation abol-

ishing slavery, his proclamation inciting the slaves

of your State to burn your homes and murder your

your families! If you swore to support this

proclamation, you would perjure yourself, for it is

in direct violation of the Constitution, as you would

know. Old Abe has perjured himself and he wishes

to put you in the same category of villainy.

Not only must you swear to endorse his infamous

document—so pronounced by the civilized world—but

but you must also take an oath to support all the

acts of Congress which have been passed, abolishing

slavery, confiscating your property, placing you in

subject to one-tenth of the community and publicly

executing your glorious Chieftains, and every officer

from a Colonel up to Gen. Lee.

When the United States Congress last met, Lin-

coln was called upon, by the pressure of public sen-

timent, to propose some terms of peace to the "rebel-

s" of the South—to advance the greatest indepen-

encies that could be possibly proffered to secure

their return to the Union; and after long consider-

ation, amid all the pressure of the peace element in

the North, and in out of Congress, the best propo-

sition could be offered, was to support one-tenth of

the Southern community who would swear to assist

in the secession of the property of the remaining

nine-tenths of their negroes, and have every

man whose bravery has elevated him above a cer-

tain rank, even though you have seen fit to place

in civil office. What! Deliver up to the maligni-

ty of the South, with flesh, fill, veins with the

blood they have so generously shed, and their lungs

with their last pray'r for their country's triumph and

independence. (Innumerable applause.)

Suppose your State should tomorrow secede from

the Confederacy; what would become of your sol-

diers in the army? Some would runaway and come

home, no doubt; but the mass of them who have

followed that old battle flag through smoke and fire,

in the presence of death, and waved its bloody

flags upon the heights of an hundred fields of tri-

umph, and the cheers of victory that thrill an ap-

plauding world—do you suppose that they would

trample it under foot and crawl upon their bellies and

eat and die in that sort of style? (Great applause.)

Let no man say this is a fancy sketch. Do not

say old Abe is joking; that he will certainly do

more than that. I pledge you my existence he

would not do half so well. Do you not see how

artful he is even while offering us so little? He

wants to breed this very civil war which I am

here to-day to warn you against. He wants to set

up a government within the government of North

determine; it is for the Courts to decide. There being no Supreme Court of the Confederacy, (so much the better for you) the interpretation of the laws of Congress is left to your own judges, men of your own choice. If it is a violation of rights, let your judges say so, and not a single military man, who has got in a substitute shall be carried from the State of North Carolina if your Governor can help it. (Applause.) But if it is decided to be according to law, he shall go, if I can compel him. — But let us see how much consistency there would be in proposed action on this singular question. — Why, gentlemen, as early as two years ago the conscript law came along and seized the poor fellow who had this little claim on the old hardy soldier to pull the youngest out of the first, living on rented land, in a leaky cabin. He had no money and he was forced to go. Did anybody propose to raise a revolution to gain it? Not a single solitary man thought of such a thing. But I, a neighbor, on whose land that poor conscript was living, having his pockets stuffed with money, bought his carcass out of doors, meanwhile the poor recruit was down with anxiety thinking about his wife and helpless little ones, never having fought, and had turned to protect, among others, his rich neighbor, in the interim, has dressed in purple and fine, fared sumptuously every day, and made so much money by speculating that he don't know what to do with it. Congress says the exigencies of the hour demand more men and it is about time for this man to take his place alongside of his poor tenant and help drive back the foe. — "But," says some, "it is a violation of the law, we will kick up a fuss and plunge ourselves into danger for the benefit of the man who buys himself out of danger." (Laughter.) My remarks are not intended to apply to all principals of substitutes, for many of them have been compelled, on tenth, perhaps to act by force of circumstances. But you know that blue bands of them are either speculators, or original speculators who helped to bring on the war, and are now trying to get themselves out of it by hook or crook. (Applause.)

I heard of a gentleman, who, to get rid of a beggar's importunity, at length gave him two quarters. About an o'clock in the morning he was aroused by a great banging at his door. On going to see the cause of the unreasonable visit, he found the fellow at the door. "You gave me two quarters this morning." "Well, are you not satisfied?" "No, I ain't; one of 'em was a slick quarter, and I come here to collect the 'other five cents.' (Great laughter.) That fellow had rather a small soul, and I was going to say he was the meanest man I ever heard of. But I happen to know some fellows who were so red hot for the war, that had you thrown them into a branch they would have fizzed, (laughter,) now that fighting by proxy is played out, say to some Convention man, "Well, fellow, you have been right all the time; turn down the sheet quick, we want to get in bed with you." (Cheers and laughter.) I know some men who were the most furious when the start, who were for giving the last man and last dollar, (provided they didn't happen to be the one final individual,) and the dollar came out of the pocket of any other man) and now it is a sure sign, when the question begins to come along, to see the whites of their eyes turn up, and the palms of their hands begin to sweat, and their knees beat the roll long in the appearance of the swelling officer. "We can't stand it." It's a violation of faith. The agreement was to fight by proxy. It will never do. We must go out." (Laughter and applause.)

If it is not a legal outrage, let the men who put in substitutes go to the war, and be thankful they have not been shot during the last two years.

"Good," "hit 'em again."

There is a great deal said about the danger of the military authorities overreaching the civil. Well, I acknowledge all that. There is danger. But there was never yet a war where the same danger did not arise, and especially a war like ours that taxes the whole energies of the people, that permeates every strata of society, and is the sole business of the day. We may forget, in the midst of the pomp and circumstances of the war, that we have civil rights and constitutional liberties. I have striven against this danger as much as any man in the country. We must all strive against it. But if we undertake to go out of the Southern Confederacy on this account, and to go to Mr. Lincoln to get these rights, I think it would be the part of prudence, to say the least, while we are smirking and trying, and the under side done pretty brown, to look over into the clouds and estimate their temperature. We might be glad enough to get back into the pan, hot as it is. — [Applause and merriment.] Seward boasted to Lord Lyons that he could touch a bell at his table, and arrest any man in the United States, and no man dare enquire why or wherefore. He has arrested editors in almost every town in the North for a simple expression of opinion. He arrested Vallandigham, tried him by military court, in open violation of the Constitution, and banished him. I hardly think we could find much protection for civil liberty in the dominion of Abraham the First. There is talk of the writ of *habeas corpus* being suspended in the Southern States. I understand it has already been suspended by Congress; but the suspension of this writ may not be in contravention of the Constitution; for the courts have decided that Congress can suspend the writ within certain limits. I hold in my hand a copy of the Raleigh *Progress* contains an Article written by one of the first lawyers of the land. The language of the Constitution referred to is Art. 1, Sec. 9, 3d clause, as follows:

The privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus* shall not be suspended unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion, the public safety may require it. Commencing on this page:

These gentlemen, in the ardor of accomplishing their favorite scheme of conceiving all men who have put in substitutes, have overlooked what we are sure they might have learnt of any "pretty judge" in the land, namely: that the suspension of the writ is limited to "offenses," either actual or suspected, endangering the public safety."

Congress "may provide for the arrest and imprisonment of offenders or of suspected offenders, and forbid their release, while the exigency lasts." Offenders in fact or suspected offenders are the only persons as to whom the privilege of the writ can be constitutionally suspended. Of this character was the bill for its suspension in the time of Burn's conspiracy. A very few words will make this perfectly plain. The power to suspend the writ is given only in cases of invasion and rebellion; and in these only, when the public safety may require it."

I take it for granted no man of any legal knowledge will deny that. I regret to see the suspension of the writ. It is evidence of wrong existing somewhere—either of a desire upon the part of the government to assume more authority than belongs to it, or of a state of affairs in some parts of the country that argues ill. But in the name of common sense, if we are a law abiding people, if we regard the King's name as a tower of strength, we must not make a commotion because a law has been enacted which our jurists announce as within the limits of the Constitution of the country that we have sworn to support. We ought to be willing to stand up to our own Constitution and our own laws. If they are improper, if they are hard upon us, let us instruct our Representatives to repeal them and give us better ones.

But they are doing any better in Mr. Lincoln's country? Poor old Kentucky that we used to regard as a most chivalrous and independent State, undertook to be neutral. She declared she would take no part in the quarrel. But Mr. Lincoln soon thrashed neutrality out of Kentucky, made her furnish her quota of men, and subjected her to her share of all the burden of the government. Some time ago the election for Governor of the State came off. Two candidates were in the field—both Union men—but one of them opposed to the Abolition policy of Lincoln's administration. An individual by the name of Burnside—Gen. Burnside—A. E. Burnside—I had the honor of making his acquaintance down at Newbern, though I hadn't much time to exchange compliments with him. I had an engagement about that time and had to cut the interview rather short. (Laughter.) Well, Gen. A. E. Burnside, aforesaid was in Kentucky about the time of the election, and proclaimed martial law over the entire State. Now, there is a great difference between the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* in certain cases, and the extension of martial law over a State. The former takes cognizance of a certain class of high crimes, but does not otherwise interfere with the civil functions of the community. Martial law is proclaimed all civil laws are suspended; a citizen can do nothing without the consent of the military; he can scarcely skin a potato or take a chew of tobacco without permission of the provost marshal. Here is Gen. Burnside's orders on the occasion referred to; his first proclaiming martial law I need not read:

HEADQUARTERS, 3RD ARMY CORPS, Columbus, Ky., July 29, 1863.

GENERAL ORDERS, NO. 47.

That no further delay may exist as to the intent and meaning of the order No. 130 dated, Headquarters, 10th Army Corps, July 15, 1863, it is ordered that no person shall be permitted to be voted for or be a candidate for office, who has not been a citizen of the United States, or by proper authority, for fifteen days, or language or sentiments.

County Judges within this district are hereby directed, as Judges and Clerks of election, to exercise a strict vigilance, and be uncompromising and uncompromising for the Union and for the suppression of the rebellion, and are further ordered to revoke and recall any appointment of Judges and Clerks of election.

Judges and Clerks of election are hereby ordered not to place the name of any person upon the poll books, to whom the original or any subsequent act of disloyalty, or who may be considered a traitor to the Union, and the suppression of the rebellion, and who may be opposed to the vigorous prosecution of the war against the rebels, known as the "Confederate States," to help them.

The election oath is prescribed and will be administered by Judges of election to voters and to such candidates as reside within the district.

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